

The Oregonian.

PORTLAND, TUESDAY, JAN. 19, 1856.

THE BOY'S AND GIRL'S AID SOCIETY.

The manual of the Boy's and Girl's Aid Society of Oregon, together with the law to provide for the suspension of final judgment against minors in criminal cases, has been published. Thought organized last July, the association has not yet succeeded in securing the services of a superintendent. The requirements for such an office are of a peculiar nature, and an efficient intelligent work will demand largely upon the superintendent. It is to be done such choice until the services of a suitable person can be secured. In the meantime the executive committee are doing the work of the association as far as possible. The law under which the society acts was passed last February, and was one of the few intelligent and effective acts of the Oregon legislature at its first winter session. It will have been published in THE OREGONIAN, and it is now in the hands of every legislator, and all these and many other informations demand that the bill be introduced in some usual labor. The ways of applying this labor have been tried. Penitentiaries have been turned into factories and convicts employed as operatives, the whole business being conducted by the state. Again, factory buildings within the prison walls have been leased to private manufacturers and convict operatives supplied. Convict labor, in other instances, has been leased to corporations to dig canals, to build roads and railroads, and has been used in some of the southern states. It has been employed in traction plantations. In our own state several of these plans have been tried, and at the present time one private factory, at least, is in operation upon the penitentiary grounds at Salem, managed in all departments except those of designing and supervision, by convicts.

Against all these plans there is a protest by those or employers with whom convict labor or its products come in contact. In the name of independent labor, otherwise it would not be employed. The manufacturer who uses it can always undersell the market; his competitors whose commodities are the produce of free and costless labor. It is natural that manufacturers who are undercut in the markets and tradesmen or laborers who suffer in loss of employment through convict competition, should object to it as illegitimate and improper.

Opposition to the employment of convict labor in direct or indirect competition with free and costless labor, is not yet a murmur in Oregon, where the interests involved are small, but becomes a popular protest in several states where manufacturing interests are large. In Ohio the employment of such labor in manufactures has been stopped by legislative enactment and the convicts of that state are either kept in idleness or engaged in penitentiaries and practically useless work. The effect upon prison discipline and upon the men themselves is bad, and it was owing to the New York Legislature's practice of sending convicts to labor that the employment of such labor in manufactures of "star account." The superintendent and warden of the Utica county prison buys large quantities of material, selects the branches of industry to be pursued, directs the operations of hundreds of workmen, and finds the market for a large product. As a result the state has had a small profit, and the state savings bank has increased its interest in the warden, represented by a pension of \$100 per month. This is less objectionable than the employment of such labor in the warden's office, but may be made self-supporting by proper management. This plan is less objectionable than the employment of convicts at less rates of wages than ordinary operatives, but still it is objected to by the trades of the star account.

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THE RATE OF SENATIONALISM.

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but in populous cities the form of disposal of the dead by burning will at no distant day become general. It is but a step from legislation that makes cremation legal and that which will make it compulsory in times of pestilence.

Maine, have recently attracted attention by showing that the largest percentage of insanity to population comes from the farming class. This report is said to have been obtained from similar statistics in other New England states. News papers generally are expressing great alarm at this. They say that the life of a farmer, if as it is ought to be from excellent and happy, ought not to lead to insanity. But if any body imagines that the life of a farmer in New England secures freedom from care, exemption from the miseries of life, or even of mind, he is mistaken. At least from the little we have by observation of the working classes of New England, we should say so. The wonder is that any man or anybody, able to endure the strain of farming in New England.

An old church at Stephen's, Staten Island, New York, at Boston, a few days ago, represented the first family of the country to be buried in a vault. Father, mother, son, daughter, wife, and infant, were laid out upon the floor. It is not necessary that his language be that of a Puritan. The fact is, that the life of a farmer, if as it is ought to be from excellent and happy, ought not to lead to insanity. But if any body imagines that the life of a farmer in New England secures freedom from care, exemption from the miseries of life, or even of mind, he is mistaken. At least from the little we have by observation of the working classes of New England, we should say so.

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